

**Surgery of the Chest. 6th Edn.**

D.C. Sabiston and F.C. Spencer, Eds.

W.B. Saunders, 1995.

2174 pages, price £195. ISBN 0-7216-5271-9

This is the sixth edition of a multiauthored text covering cardiothoracic surgery. The book deals with adult and paediatric cardiac surgery, thoracic surgery, thoracic transplantation, anaesthesia for cardiac and thoracic surgery, and postoperative care. Surgical techniques are more completely illustrated in the companion *Atlas of Cardiothoracic Surgery*, published in its first edition. *Surgery of the Chest* now weighs 7.2 kg but is printed in two volumes. Most chapters are written by internationally recognised authorities, such as Floyd Loop on coronary reoperations and Hermes Grillo on tracheal lesions. I thought the chapters on cardiac tumours and transplantation too short and on anaesthesia too long.

The layout is traditional, i.e., subject and not disease or syndrome centred. The text is closely packed and somewhat difficult to follow. Some illustrations betray their age but most are excellent. The index is satisfactory. Most authors, usefully, select the best references and provide a brief abstract of each.

The strengths of this book are completeness, the authority of the authors, the selected references, and the ease of finding the answers to specific questions. Its weaknesses are size and the relative paucity of illustrations and tables. The readership of this book will be career grade trainees in cardiothoracic surgeons and established consultants. I suspect vascular surgeons would be more interested in Crawford's *Diseases of the Aorta* than the vascular sections of this book. Indeed there is almost no discussion of concomitant carotid disease and coronary artery atheroma or of combined carotid endarterectomy and coronary artery bypass grafting. In all, I prefer Kirklin and Barratt-Boyes for cardiac surgery and Glenn for thoracic.

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**Sclerotherapy of Spider Veins**

V. Vitale-Lewis, Ed.

Butterworth Heinemann, 1995.

142 pages, price £65. ISBN 0-7506-9459-9

It is unfortunate that the provenance of the author is not detailed, but it is clear she is an experienced authority on the subject. The book starts with some

chapters on the anatomy, morphology and investigation of varicose veins derived from long and short saphenous systems. There is detail on their evaluation by continuous wave Doppler. Whilst this is interesting it is not relevant to the main subject of the book.

However, the sclerotherapy of spider veins of the lower limb is covered concisely and comprehensively. It is easy and quick to read; well referenced and liberally illustrated with colour photographs depicting the result of various cases treated. The latter are encouraging, informative and interesting to view but perhaps need not be so extensive. I would suspect they are inevitably responsible for the relatively high price of the book.

The author considers everything that one might wish or need to know. There are details on the choice of various sclerosants, their pros and cons and in different doses; she gives excellent advice on the technique of injecting and in particular the relative risks and nature of complications as related to different agents. It contains many helpful and valuable tips which are clearly borne of years of personal experience and success.

There is a tendency for repetition, but this is inevitable when covering a small subject. A particularly important point is the need for constraint when advising clients, as to the potentials of the technique. The author rightly emphasises the limitations of the procedure and wisely cautions over optimism to avoid patient disappointment and disillusionment.

For anyone who wishes to take up the compression sclerotherapy of spider veins this is an excellent starting point and the book is warmly recommended. For those who are already practised in this art, however, there are more comprehensive texts which might be more appealing.

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**Amputation: Surgical Practice and Patient Management**

G. Murdoch and A. Bennett Wilson, Eds.

Butterworth Heinemann, 1996. 391 pages, £85.

This multi-authored book, edited by two eminent orthopaedic surgeons, was apparently conceived during a conference organised by the International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics. The stated aim of the conference was to arrive at a consensus concerning the best practices for amputation at all levels. The book as a result is intended as a comprehensive text on

amputations, and is as a result frequently repetitive both in content and in reference (a fact mentioned by the editors in the preface).

Most authors are orthopaedic surgeons and this emphasis is reflected in the book. The text is organised in a logical fashion and covers all aspects of amputation. This ranges from a section on the principles of amputation, to a number of sections on the various levels of amputation, to sections dealing with the causes of amputation, and finally to a section on rehabilitation. There are many good photographs and illustrations.

From the vascular surgical point of view, a number of chapters regarding the biomechanics and prosthetics of various amputations are informative. Other chapters that are of interest are "Minor amputations after revascularisation for gangrene in diabetics" by P.E. Holstein and "The problem amputation stump" by K.P. Robinson. Both chapters address problems frequently seen in vascular surgical practice and offer

sound advice regarding the management of patients with these difficult clinical problems. The short section on "Amputation in vascular disease" is a concise overview of this problem but does not help in solving many of the dilemmas faced in this subset of patients.

The book is not sufficiently comprehensive to be a definitive text on amputation. All the topics regarding amputations are covered, but many of the chapters do not adequately review the data presently available. There also appears to have been a substantial delay in the publication of the book. In addition the book does not sufficiently focus on the individual subgroups of patients in whom amputations are performed to be of major value to the average vascular surgeon. It will however be of value to individuals with a specific interest in amputations.

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